Appendix V.

[*Vide* answer to starred question No. 1385 asked by Sri A. Ratnam at the meeting of the Legislative Assembly held on 13th August 1954, page 646 supra.]

Note showing the particulars of the scheme started by the Government of Madras for the utilization of the Grant-in-aid for the removal of untouchability.

Provision of multi-purpose cement platforms for Harijan families.—A community centre to provide enlightenment and entertainment regularly and as a place for social celebrations like weddings is likely to create a collective consciousness, as well to serve a strongly felt need. In every village where there are more than 20 Harijan families a community centre will be organized. A decently sized cement floor will be built in all the villages covered by the scheme. The floor would not be more than one foot above the ground level and the spot selected would be such as to be useful for variety purposes. When a pandal roof is put up over it during festival or other occasions it would serve as a convenient pavilion. This will be near the Harijan houses but will also be accessible to caste-Hindus and others. This will serve as a play platform for children and as a drying yard for grains, etc. For this, the cost, if labour is provided free, is estimated at Rs. 500.

2. *Equipment.*—Every centre will have—

(1) standard equipment;

(2) a standard programme of activities;

(3) a standard organization which will be of a committee of five, of which three will be Harijans and two non-Harijans interested in Harijan Welfare. The village headman will be the secretary of the committee everywhere. The equipment may consist of

(*a*) a radio set,

(*b*) a library; in any case, some periodicals may be available for reading, and

(*c*) an adult literacy centre.

3. *Programme.*—The standard programme will be of functions on every Saturday of the month in which all the Harijans and their sympathizers will participate.

The programme will be—

First Saturday—Bhajans.

Second Saturday—Reading from religious books.

Third Saturday—Reading on general subjects and dramas, other entertainments, games and sports.

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30th of the month—Which is already celebrated as 'Harijan Day' will replace the fourth Saturday and will be devoted to the existing programme of worship in the temple, sharing of common services and facilities like wells, public choultries, hostels, hair-cutting saloons, etc.

4. *Organization.*—Village headmen will be responsible for organizing these community centres within a time fixed.

They will also help in constituting the village committees. They will maintain a log-book for each centre in which activities including the attendance at the various weekly functions will be recorded. A sum of Rs. 500 will be allocated to each district for distribution as rewards to village headmen who have rendered meritorious service.

5. The next unit in the organization is the taluk which will have a taluk committee consisting of the nominees of the Harijan Sevak Sangh and presided over by the Tahsildar. At district level, the existing Harijan Welfare Committee will be the controlling body, being augmented by one representative of the Harijan Sevak Sangh. He will be designated as District Harijan Sevak in charge of community centres on an honorarium of Rs. 150 per mensem. He will be assisted by Deputy Sevaks of the grade of Revenue Inspectors at the rate of one for organizing hundred community centres. The Deputy Sevaks will be attached to taluk committees.

6. *Miscellaneous.*—To create the proper psychology among non-Harijans, the following will be done :—

(1) To interest the youth and thinking section of the public, annual competitions will be held for the best short stories, plays and other writings on the theme 'Harijans are of our own flesh, as gentle, as good and as great'. Separate competitions will be held for adults, children and students. An amount of Rs. 3,000 will be set apart for this purpose.

(2) A monthly periodical in Tamil devoted to advancing Harijan interests and giving Harijan news will be started. If independent issue will be too expensive it will be a supplement to some well-known paper of wide circulation which will undertake to publicise the news and views of special importance to Harijans.

(3) Posters will be printed but it will be of advantage to have the posters printed by the Government of India for the whole country with captions in different languages.